

Department of Public Health
and Human Services

Section:
APPLICATION PROCESSING

TANF CASH ASSISTANCE

Subject:
Processing

Supersedes: TANF 103-5 (07/01/05)

References: ARM 37.78.101, .102, .226 - .228 and .424

GENERAL RULE—All completed ‘Application for Assistance’ (HCS-250) and ‘Reapplication Addendum’ (HCS-249) forms must be processed and eligibility determined in a timely manner.

During the application processing period, TEAMS case notes must be entered documenting the interview and any processing delays.

PROCESSING TIME FRAMES

An application is valid for 45 days from the application date. The eligibility determination - approval or denial - must be completed within this 45-day time period. This time limitation serves to protect the applicant’s right to receive benefits in a timely manner.



NOTE: The application date counts as “day one” in the 45-day time period.

If there is a delay of processing beyond 45 days due to the actions of a third party that is beyond the control of the Eligibility Case Manager and/or the applicant/participant, the processing time frames may extend beyond 45 days, if approved by a supervisor.

► GOOD CAUSE

If the household has good cause for failing to comply with a non-financial eligibility requirement and they are making a good faith effort to comply, the individual is coded ‘DQ’ until they are able to comply or the good faith effort stops. An eligibility determination is made for the remaining household members if all necessary information is provided.

EXAMPLE: Mom and two children. Mom is not able to provide proof of citizenship. She was born in Ohio and has sent off a request for a birth certificate. All other information necessary to determine eligibility is provided. Code mom ‘DQ’ on SEPA and determine eligibility for the remainder of the household.

If mom turns in her birth certificate within 45 days of application, she is added to the assistance unit effective the date of application and benefits are supplemented. If mom turns in her birth certificate after the 45-day window, she is added to the assistance unit the first day of the following month.

OUT OF STATE

When the applicant indicates he/she has moved to Montana from another

MONTHS

state or from a Tribal TANF area, the Eligibility Case Manager must verify assistance has terminated (or is not currently being received) in that state/tribe by either requesting a copy of the applicant's closure notice or contacting the other state/tribe directly. If assistance has been received in the other state/tribe in the application month, the income should be entered on the UNIN screen as 'AP'.

Complete Form FA-100, "Out-Of-State TANF Benefit Verification Request" and submit to **Carol Carpenter, Central Office** for out-of-state inquiries for TANF time-limited benefits. Note on the FA-100 that benefits were received in the other state and Montana in the same month. That month will not be entered for the other state.



NOTE: If there is a possibility that the household has received close to 60 months of TANF assistance, do an immediate referral to Carol Carpenter for an out of state inquiry.

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

An authorized representative may be designated to act on the behalf of the minor child(ren) and the specified caretaker relative(s) with whom the child is living. This representative may or may not be a member of the filing/assistance unit. The representative must be designated in writing by a specified caretaker relative or other responsible member of the filing/assistance unit and must be aware of relevant information and the family's circumstances.



NOTE: An authorized representative is not the same thing as a protective payee. For the protective payee policy, see TANF 104-2.

If the caretaker relative is not competent and thus unable to sign the application, another competent adult filing unit member may sign it. In the absence of a competent adult filing unit member, a legal guardian must sign. If there is no legal guardian, the authorized representative may sign the application and other pertinent documents and TEAMS Case Notes (CANO) must substantiate why the caretaker relative did not sign the required documents.

The authorized representative will be required to present all required information and verification requested.

ADDING OR REMOVING A HOUSEHOLD MEMBER AT APPLICATION

If the application **is still pending** at the time a new required filing unit member is reported, the additional required filing unit member should be added effective the date of application. The Adding a Household member form (HCS-261A) must be used to gather the necessary information on the new household member if that individual is an adult.

EXAMPLE:

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Application dated 9/4/06 includes Mom, child age 4, unborn and father of the unborn (not father of other child). Assistance unit would include Mom and 4 year old child. Request for additional information has been sent, TANF application is pending. Mom reports on 9/12/06 that she had the baby on 9/10/06. Since the application is still pending, the assistance unit now would include Mom, 4 year old, new baby and father of the new baby. Application date would be 9/4/06 for all members and benefits for all household members would be prorated from that date.



NOTE: All financial and non-financial eligibility criteria must be verified and documented for each new household member, as outlined in TANF 103-4.

If the application **is still pending** at the time it is reported that a required filing unit member has moved out of the household, remove the member the date of application.

NOTE: There might be income in the form of contributions from the household member who has moved out of the home.

If the application **has been processed**, follow the adding/removing members guidelines in TANF 201-3.

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

The household may voluntarily withdraw its application prior to a determination of eligibility. Voluntary withdrawal means that the applicant, on his/her own initiative, has contacted the county office, either orally or in writing, and requested processing of the application stop. The Eligibility Case Manager will document the reason for withdrawal, if one is given or known (TEAMS Screen CANO), and send a notice to the applicant to confirm the request. Use TEAMS Denial Code: WDR. The application form must be retained by the county office. Send TEAMS notice X260.

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